

## Tokkatsu Manual 1

### How to Conduct Class Meetings

*This manual explains how to conduct class meetings. It can be used in both elementary and junior high schools. Please adapt it flexibly according to the situation of your school and class. In junior high schools, please read “children” as “students.”*

### What Is a Class Meeting?

#### 1. Purpose

- (1) Class meetings make the classroom a place where children can enjoy learning and feel safe, through their own ideas and ingenuity. Through class meetings, children can identify problems in the class, work together to solve them, and improve their relationships with friends by planning and carrying out enjoyable activities together.
- (2) As children become able to engage in discussion, they learn to express their own opinions and accept different opinions from their friends. They also develop the ability to listen to minority opinions and find mutually acceptable solutions that everyone can agree on. In this way, class meetings help create a classroom where psychological safety is maintained.
- (3) Through these activities, children can develop initiative, the ability to plan and carry out activities with foresight, the ability to participate in society, cooperation with friends, problem-solving skills, and other important competencies.

#### 2. How to Conduct the Discussion

- The Planning Committee, or chairperson team, should rotate among the regular classroom groups so that all children have the opportunity to experience serving on the chairperson team.
- The chairperson team should consist of four to five children: a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, a board recorder, and a notebook recorder.
- At the beginning, the vice-chairperson announces the aim of the discussion and the two main discussion points.
- The discussion proceeds in three stages: “sharing ideas,” “comparing ideas,” and “summarizing.”

##### \* Sharing ideas:

Children express the opinions they have prepared in advance. They should always give reasons for their opinions.

The board recorder writes each opinion on laminated strips of paper with a whiteboard marker and places them on the board.

Children share their opinions by raising their hands. Children who do not raise their hands do not need to be forced to speak.

##### \* Comparing ideas:

Children ask questions in order to better understand one another’s opinions, and express agreement while giving reasons.

They also try to clarify and resolve any concerns as much as possible.

Ideas that receive no comments at all at this stage are moved to the “Thank You Corner.” This means narrowing down the ideas.

##### \* Summarizing:

The class does not decide by majority vote. There are mainly two methods.

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① Classify the ideas into categories and choose one idea from each category.

This is the method used by the teacher in the video material for lower-grade children.

② Think of a way that makes use of the good points of each idea and that everyone can accept.

This is a method of consensus building through mutual adjustment.

Example: When some children want to eat “curry” and others want to eat “katsu,” the following solutions are possible.

\* Menu Plan Type: Eat curry today and katsu tomorrow.

\* Mini-Bowl Type: Eat both a small portion of curry and a small portion of katsu.

\* Katsu Curry Type: Combine them and eat katsu curry.

The basis for mutual adjustment is the reason for the proposal and the class goal.

Therefore, proposals and reasons for proposals that are closer to the reason for the proposal or the class goal become more persuasive.

- For the second discussion point, the children discuss “ways to make the activity better.” This is where the fun and sense of fulfillment increase.
- What has been decided should be carried out thoroughly.
- The teacher should stay in the background as much as possible, while giving advice at key points when necessary.

### Column 1: Why Should We Avoid Majority Vote?

\* Because majority voting can disregard minority opinions.

→ Children may not understand or accept why their idea was not chosen.

\* Because majority voting does not generate creative ideas.

→ Creativity emerges when different opinions are combined.

\* However, majority voting may be used when the ideas have been carefully examined and there is not enough time.

### Column 2: Let's Practice Consensus Building

In a teacher training workshop, we practiced consensus building under the theme: “Plan a mini-game that helps participants get to know each other within ten minutes.”

For the first discussion point, we discussed “what to do.” For the second discussion point, we discussed “what kinds of ideas or arrangements would make the activity better.”

For the first discussion point, four ideas were proposed: “Anything Basket,” “Birthday Line,” a “Self-Introduction True-or-False Quiz,” and a “Gesture Game.” The participants reached a “That sounds good!” consensus on the following plan:

- First, make a line in the order of birthdays, and then divide the line in the middle to make two lines.
- Next, have the two lines compete in a gesture relay game.
- Then, return to one line, sit down in a circle, and play Anything Basket.
- The person who becomes “it” in Anything Basket gives a true-or-false quiz about themselves.

This was a solution in which two ideas were combined in the “Katsu Curry Type,” and then those two combined ideas were carried out together in the “Mini-Bowl Type.”

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For the second discussion point, “ways to make the activity better,” the following ideas were proposed: “When participants find a seat in Anything Basket, they give a high five to the person next to them,” “Those who answer the true-or-false quiz correctly give a high five to the person who is ‘it,’” and “Play music during the activity.” Since all of these ideas seemed good, we decided to put all of them into practice.

Because we were able to play a game that we had designed and improved by ourselves, it was very enjoyable and gave us a strong sense of fulfillment.

### 3. Outcomes of Discussion

By experiencing successful consensus building in which everyone feels, “That sounds good!”, children can:

- become less afraid to express their opinions, because they understand that sharing opinions is necessary for good consensus building;
- become able to express critical or negative views about other people’s opinions, because they understand that such views are also necessary for good consensus building;
- come to believe that, no matter what happens, problems can be solved through discussion.

As a result, the classroom becomes a space where psychological safety is maintained.

Children also become able to make decisions through discussion in other settings, such as lessons, student council activities, committee activities, and club activities.

### 4. Recommended: Five-Minute Meetings to Develop Children’s Problem-Solving Skills

- Set aside time for a “Five-Minute Mini-Meeting” at least once a week.
- What is a Five-Minute Mini-Meeting?

It is an opportunity for children to solve small problems in the class by themselves.

Example:

Two of the five children on lunch duty are absent. What should the class do?

× Teacher: “Then, today’s class helpers, please do the lunch duty for them.”

= The teacher takes over the problem-solving.

○ Teacher: “Oh, that’s a problem. Please discuss it together and decide what to do.”

- Hold this activity when there is enough time and when the teacher has enough emotional space to do so.
- How to conduct a Five-Minute Mini-Meeting:
  - \* Gather the children who are nearby and ask them to discuss the problem.
  - \* Ask the child closest to you to serve as the chairperson.
  - \* Set a timer for five minutes. When the timer beeps, ask the chairperson, “What did you decide?”

### Column 3: Children’s Conflicts Can Also Be Solved Through Discussion

Let us also try using a Five-Minute Meeting to help children resolve conflicts.

The purpose of the discussion is not to decide “who was wrong” or “who should apologize.” Rather, the purpose is to decide what the two children should do now in order to move toward the kind of relationship they want to have.

But what should we do if the relationship they want is, “I am upset, so I want to keep some distance,” or “I do not want to have anything to do with the other person”? It is unfortunate, but if that is what the two children

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decide they want, there may be no choice but to accept it for the time being. The teacher can observe the situation for a while.

It is also common for relationships to change through opportunities to cooperate in class activities and school events. While hoping that the relationship between the two children will improve, the teacher should create various opportunities for them to take part in activities together.

\*If children are trained from the lower grades to resolve conflicts among themselves, guidance becomes easier when they reach the upper grades. However, teachers should be careful. In cases of bullying, problems involving SNS or other issues that are difficult to see, or conflicts among upper-grade girls, trying to have the children resolve the problem only between themselves may sometimes make the situation worse. When children have a conflict, the teacher should not immediately decide who is right or wrong. Instead, when appropriate, the teacher can help children explain what happened, listen to each other, and think together about what they can do next. This provides another opportunity to practice problem solving through discussion.

## 5. References

National Institute for Educational Policy Research, Tokkatsu Activities Video Materials.

[https://www.nier.go.jp/kaihatsu/shidousiryou/sho\\_tokkatsueizo/index.html](https://www.nier.go.jp/kaihatsu/shidousiryou/sho_tokkatsueizo/index.html)

Tokkatsu: Creating Better Class and School Life Together, Elementary School Edition, also known as the “Green Book.”

[https://www.nier.go.jp/kaihatsu/shidousiryou/sho\\_tokkatsueizo/pdf/pamphlet-e01.pdf](https://www.nier.go.jp/kaihatsu/shidousiryou/sho_tokkatsueizo/pdf/pamphlet-e01.pdf)

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